Thomas A. Edison Papers Digital Edition

Edison-Miller Family Records

Edison-Ford Winter Estates, Fort Myers, Fla.

[X104U-F] Ford, Henry

Edison-Miller Family Papers

Title

[X104U-F] Ford, Henry

Description

This document is an undated typescript, probably from a newspaper interview, of Henry Ford's recollections of how he first met Thomas Edison. According to Ford, he saw Edison briefly as the inventor passed through Detroit on the way to attend his father's funeral before formally meeting Edison at the Association of Edison Illuminating Companies convention in August 1896. Ford recalled conversing with Edison and his "old boss" Alex Dow about the possibilities of electric cars. Ford's statement that these events had occurred thirty-two years earlier indicates that the interview probably took place in 1928.

This document was added in August 2012.

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Alternative Title

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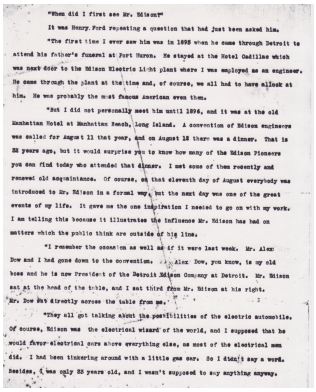

"When did I first see Mr. Edison?"

It was Henry Ford repeating a question that had just been asked him.

"The first time I ever saw him was in 1896 when he came through Detroit to attend his father's funeral at Port Huron. He stayed at the Hotel Cadillac which was next door to the Edison Electric Light plant where I was employed as an engineer. He came through the plant at the time and, of course, we all had to have a look at him. He was probably the most famous American even then.

"But I did not personally meet him until 1896, and it was at the old Manhattan Hotel at Manhattan Beach, Long Island. A convention of Edison engineers was called for August 11 that year, and on August 15 there was a dinner. That is 32 years ago, but it would surprise you to know how many of the Edison Pioneers you can find today who attended that dinner. I met some of them recently and renewed old acquaintance. Of course, on that eleventh day of August everybody was introduced to Mr. Edison in a formal way, but the next day was one of the great events of my life. It gave me the one inspiration I needed to go on with my work. I am telling this because it illustrates the influence Mr. Edison has had on matters which the public think are outside of his line.

"I remember the occasion as well as if it were last week. Mr. Alex Dow and I had gone down to the convention. Alex Dow, you know, is my old boss and he is now President of the Detroit Edison Company at Detroit. Mr. Edison sat at the head of the table, and I sat third from Mr. Edison at his right. Mr. Dow sat directly across the table from me.

"They all got talking about the possibilities of the electric automobile. Of course, Edison was the electrical wizard of the world, and I supposed that he would favor electrical cars above everything else, as most of the electrical men did. I had been tinkering around with a little gas car. So I didn't say a word. Besides, I was only 33 years old, and I wasn't supposed to say anything anyway.

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[X104UA], Reminiscence, Henry Ford, 1928

Title
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Author
Ford, Henry

Mentioned

- Edison Electric Illuminating Co (Detroit)
- Association of Edison Illuminating Companies
- Edison Pioneers
- Dow, Alex
- Edison, Samuel Ogden, (Father)
- Edison, Thomas Alva

Date
1928-00-00

Type
Reminiscence

Subject

- Reminiscences
- Automobiles and trucks
- Electric battery

Folder ID
X104U-F

Document ID
X104UA

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Timestamp
1 January 1928

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